

# Ao Phang-nga National Park

*The geological phenomenon of land subsidence has created numerous caves, bays and towering limestone islands scattered across the provinces of Phangnga, Krabi, Trang and Satun.*

Ao Phang-nga was established in 1981, covering an area of 400 square kilometres in Mueang, Takua Thung and Ko Yao districts of Phangnga province. It comprises of mangrove forests and 42 islands. Ao Phang-nga was declared the 25<sup>th</sup> national park of Thailand

## Geography

There are prehistorical artifacts found around Khao Tao within the park boundary, which indicated

that human occupied the caves and cliffs in Phangnga and Krabi since 10,000 years ago.

The archeologists had found rock tools, broken ceramic in different patterns. Rough ceramics, parts of stone axe and sharpened fish bone were found at Ko Phra-at Thao. Cave paintings in Ao Phang-nga appear in different patterns and shapes such as man carrying fish, crab, langur, bird, elephant, alphabetlike shape arrow, fishing tool and boat.



## Flora and Fauna

Ao Phang-nga is one of the best and big mangrove forests in Thailand. The forest plays significant role in coastal ecosystem. It serves as natural storm barrier, species bank of the plants and nursery for aquatic animals. The major plants in the mangrove forest include *Rhizophora*, *Bruguiera*, *Xylocarpus* and *Avicennia* sp.

On land, tropical rain forest occupies plain and valley with deep rich soil where *Hopea*, *Artocarpus*, *Acacia*, *Garcinia*, *Morinda* and *Colocasia* sp. The tropical rain forest is found also on limestone islands, which are occupied by *Euphorbia*, *Pandanus*, *Cycas*, *Zingiber* and *Colocasia gigantea*.

The survey conducted in 1991 found that the park is home to 206 animal species, including 17 mammals, 88 birds, 18 reptiles, 3 amphibians, 24 fishes and 45 other aquatic animals. Mammals such as Dusky Leaf-monkey, Smooth-coated Otter and Crab-eating Macaque are in treated status. Birds found in the park include Pacific Reef Egret, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Oriental Pied Hornbill, Brahminy Kite and Swiftlets.

In the sea, many species of fishes and marine life such as Ray, Mullet, Coral Rockcod, Damselfish, Bannerfish, Sea Crab, Brain Coral, Sea Cucumber, Sea Fan and Shark and are widely found.



## Attractions

◆ **Ko Phanak.** The big island with plenty of cave is situated on the cruise line between Phuket and Phang-nga. By kayak, tourists can explore its marine lake inside.

◆ **Ko Hong.** The limestone island houses many chamber connecting together.

◆ **Ko Thalu Nok.** The limestone island has a tunnel where a small boat can get through.

◆ **Khao Tapu-Khao Phing Kan.** The famous landmark, where giant rock cliffs lean against each other, is a must for all tourists. The nail shape mountain, known as James Bond Island, is situated nearby.

◆ **Ko Panyi.** The fishery village that builds the whole community on elevated platform on stilt over the sea.

The park also features many attractions such as Ko Lawa Yai, Khao Machu, Ko Khai, many caves, and numerous ancient painting that can be dated back to over a thousand years.



## Getting There

- From provincial town of Phangnga, motorist can head south via Highway 4 for 8 kilometres and get on Highway 4144 to the park, which is located 4 kilometres from the main road. It is only 20 minutes by bus.
- It takes 3 hours for boat trip from Ban Tha Dan or Kasom Pier to Ao Phang-nga.